

# GOP Leaders Press For VAAP Cleanup

T 3-26-69 By BOB POE  
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WASHINGTON — GOP Congressman Bill Brock, after hearing continued promises for the past three years regarding the nation's largest and most economical producer of TNT, has stuffed a few Army generals' ears with some basic East Tennessee language:

"It's time for the Army to fish or cut bait."

At a meeting this week, the Chattanooga, along with Republican U.S. Sen. Howard Baker, State Sen. LaMar Baker and State Rep. Ray Albright, grilled the deputy assistant secretary of defense for materials, Maj. Gen. Allen T. Stanwix-Hay, and other ranking officers on the Army's plans to rid the Tyner area of air and water pollution that for the past three years have brought complaints from many residents from the area.

Rep. Brock said there has been "tremendous restraint which both the political leaders and the people of Chattanooga have exercised with regard to our growing frustration over the lack of action to achieve modernization and thereby eliminate our pollution problem."

## HAVE 'GOOD FAITH'

"I think this sense of restraint represented a sincere good faith effort on the part of the people—in the face of a situation growing more intolerable."

The congressman in the heated session at the nation's capitol told the Army, "These are the most patriotic folks in America."

"However," he added, "I question how much longer this exercise of good faith can continue in light of what I consider to be an inadequate response on the part of the Army."

Rep. Brock said the problem is "simply not a matter of spending more money to reduce pollution. The expenditure of money is for modernization and reduction of pollution, but it will also save the American taxpayer far more than we spend for modernization at the site." He estimated an annual savings of \$26 million.

Sen. Howard Baker didn't mince words either.

He said, "I don't care what you put into the plant—I'm concerned about what comes out of it."

"The Army has taken advantage of the people long enough," he continued, reminding the same president who ordered the production of the TNT also in the same order also required certain air and water pollution abatement programs must be met.

"The Tyner plant is the worst polluter of its type in the country, and it being a government installation is a crying shame," Sen. Baker stated.

REP. ALBRIGHT, of Hamilton County's Fifth District and a resident of the area most affected by the polluted air, said he "has never seen the congressman (Brock) so worked up."

"He really told it like it is—either the Army gets on the ball and gets something concrete in the works, or the congressman will find ways to do a little busing of some of those generals jobs," he added.

Rep. Albright told the Army officials, "The people who have given the most, suffered the longest, had received the least relief from the air pollution."

## 'TIRED OF PROMISES'

"We're tired of promises and would like to see some positive action by the Army," he added.

If the Army doesn't take action within the next eight days, Rep. Brock and Sen. Baker said they will hold congressional hearings on the shoreline of Lake Chickamauga, where testimony can be given as to the condition of the water and ground while participants breathe the hazy, yellow air.

Immediate resolving of the pollution problem is unrealistic. However, according to such congressmen as Dick Dickinson of Alabama, Elfred Cederberg of Michigan, Glenard Lipscomb of California and Charles R. Jonas of North Carolina, the Army "has had more than ample time to do something."

These congressmen are all members of the important appropriations committee and ranking Republicans on subcommittees on military construction, national defense posture and defense.

They raised the question "Why has the Army spent millions on other plants across the country but has failed the Volunteer Army Ammunition Plant?"

The Army replied that it did, in fact, initiate a "pollution control program" at Tyner, but the patching of pollution control devices to the 28-year-old plant did not work. Since then, Gen. Stanwix-Hay said the Army "has been studying the matter."

Rep. Brock replied, "Don't you think you should have some answers by now?"

The answer was "We're still studying."

## BROCK ANGRY

The 3rd District congressman became angered and promised to give the Army two weeks to substitute its three-year-old promises for definite positions or face severe action by quizzing congressional subcommittees, which the Army said it doesn't want.

More than two years ago, Norl Hamilton, plant manager at VAAP, presented to the Army the Canadian Industrials Ltd. plan for continued process for the manufacture of TNT at the Tyner plant. The installation of certain equipment would eliminate 98 per cent of the air and water pollution problems at VAAP, according to the plan.

Rep. Brock and Sen. Baker began pushing for complete modernization of the plant under the CIL concept.

To test the new system, the Army built a plant at a site near Radford, Va., and programmed Volunteer for modernization just as soon as the effectiveness of the new system was proven.

Since that time, the Army has not submitted any definite plans for the installation of the new process at VAAP, according to Rep. Brock. However, similar systems have been installed at other plants across the country.

Rep. Brock also told the Army that the Atlas Chemical Co., which presently holds the contract for operations of the sprawling Tyner facility, had taken the lead in drawing up and implementing various modernization plans, but that Atlas had gone as far as it could without federal cooperation.

## BIG PRODUCER

According to private and public records, VAAP operates the most efficient plant in the Army's TNT producing complex and also produces more than half the vital explosive material needed in Vietnam.

Rumors constantly circulate that the plant will continue under present operating conditions until the end of the war in Vietnam, at which time it will be completely phased out and the 2,700 acres will be returned to Hamilton Counties for industrial development or residential area.

However, ranking officials claim this is not true—that the world's largest and cheapest producer of the highest quality TNT will not be allowed to "fold."

The News-Free Press also learned several weeks ago that under the modernization plan, production would be increased, pollution decreased, and even if the plant were shut down until additional war materials were needed, the maximum production level could be achieved within a matter of hours. Other plans would necessitate several months in the restructuring before operations could resume.

Rep. Brock has stated his position:

"There is a presidential order directing that all necessary steps be taken to clean up our air and water."

I realize there is also a critical requirement for continued production of TNT at VAAP, but nevertheless we cannot permit the continued poisoning of the atmosphere and water near the plant site. Both these objectives are critical. I believe the Army has the wherewithal to accomplish both: I am demanding that it does so immediately."

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Modernization plant